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AUTHOR Weiser, John C.
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ABSTRACT

A survey was undertaken to determine the opinion of local broadcasters on the effectiveness of broadcast education to prepare students for jobs in the industry. Based on 55 questionnaires and 21 interviews of station directors and managers, it was determined that the industry preferred college educated employees whose education emphasized public speaking, journalism, advertising, and communications science. The broadcasters specifically recommended the acquisition of knowledge in sales and programing, and the skills of production, copywriting, continuity, and editing. Employers also look for experience, appearance, and personality. (EMH)

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RADIO/TV PROGRAMS: A BROADCASTERS' VIEW

A Pilot Study

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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John C. Weiser
Telecommunications
Kent State University
Kent, Ohio.

IR 008 879

RADIO/TV PROGRAMS: A BROADCASTERS' VIEW

This study had its genesis in a continuing reappraisal of the academic program in Telecommunications, which is the current title for the program at Kent State University.

The underlying assumption of this effort was that the dynamics of the broadcast enterprise demands a constant and continuing examination by academe of their programs.

We who are involved in the teaching of radio/TV courses often make the assumption that the quantity and substance of our courses are doing the job of preparing people for the broadcast enterprise. Because of such an assumption it seemed appropriate to gain some measure of its validity. It is uncertain whether the attempt was to propitiate any sins of academe or provide a defense. It did seem essential to make some assessment of that which exists to determine needs for change, if any, both in substance and sum of the courses offered and required in the program.

The fundamental hypothesis of the study is that we are preparing people for participation in some phase of the broadcast industry. Such a hypothesis assumes providing people with sufficient marketable skills for their first, and their second, third, fourth or fifth jobs. It futher assumes we are equipping people with sufficient bases for the judgements they may need as the eventual decisions makers on whatever piece of turf the propinquitous events in their lives dictate.

In light of this it was determined to do an initiatory investigation of the perceptions of professional broadcasters of academic programs in radio/TV at the college level. The principal focus was on the baccalaureate degree program. The study purports to determine the attitude of broadcasters toward the total college program including the general education program as well as the more specific offerings in radio and television.

What are the broadcasters' views towards radio and television programs at the collegiate level?

To unearth the data requisite to an answer to this question selected Ohio broadcasters were surveyed as a pilot project, and as a first step in an extensive examination of broadcast education.

This study is limited to Ohio broadcasters because that's where we live and work and for the most part the arena in which the majority of our academic progeny will perform. Further, it is limited to commercial broadcasters.

The Survey was conducted during the Fall and Winter of 1974-75.

There are 266 commercial radio stations and 34 television stations in Ohio, per the 1974 Broadcasting Yearbook, which served as the base for station selection. Seventy-five, or 25%, of these stations were included in the sample surveyed. Questionnaires were mailed to decision making personnel in these stations. Fifty-five or 73% of the questionnaires were returned. Of these returns, forty-nine were from radio personnel and six from television. The position of those responding included twenty-four general managers,

fifteen program directors, six sales managers, five news directors and five production directors. The categorical designations are mine, there were varied titles. Of these persons, only one, a station manager by some enigma, was not instrumental in the hiring of personnel. Thus the effort was to reach a selected cross section of stations reflecting a reasonable representation of Ohio radio/TV operations.

Before proceeding further let us define what is meant by the term broadcaster.

First, by broadcaster we are essentially referring to the station manager or general manager, in brief a decision maker.

Bruce Linton, writing for the NAEB Journal some years ago, in his discussion of training for broadcasting, provided the following profile of a station manager:

> First, he's a business man. Prides himself on running a sound ship, and he feels at home in the company of business men. He meets his frineds the banker, lawyer, store keeper over a morning cup of coffee or at the Rotary, Kiwanis, Lion's club or chamber of commerce.
>
> [He's] probably a leader in civic affairs. He's no stranger to the operations of a fund drive . . . he's been in the thick of plans to bring business and industry to town . . . in [his] news and public affairs he has seen much of the town to make him proud, and perhaps some things that make him take to the air and speak out about them.[1]

To these comments we might add the words of Paul Prince "The broadcaster, and by this I mean the station manager and decision maker, must be able to deal with problems and opportunities outside his station walls."[2]

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[1]Linton, Bruce. "Training in Broadcasting. An Overview for 1962." NAEB Journal, May-June, 1963. p. 48.

[2]Prince, Paul. "Thoughts on Broadcast Undergraduate Curricula" Educational Broadcasting Review, Vol. 7/2, April 1973. p. 101.

To these observations let us provide our own. The broadcaster is not the epitome of perfidy in search for profit, nor the Fagin and the money changer, albeit he must keep a close eye on the profit and loss ledger. Neither is he the paragon of professionalism nor the savior of his market through his programs and other services. He is a businessman operating a broadcast service for which service he must glean a profit. He is a decision maker from a business perspective who keeps a chary on his personnel to make certain they help him turn a profit. His staff people must produce within the parameters of their assignments and contribute to the profit margin or their positions are at best tenuous.

The questionnaire mailed to these decision makers was divided into five parts, each with a series of check off items. Each respondent was asked to rate each of the items on a 1 - 5 scale, with 1 designating the most important and 5 unimportant. Responses were measured by calculating a mean score for each of the items included.

Part one of the questionnaire rated courses in general educational as these equated with professional preparation for broadcasting.

Part two rated substantive and skill items identified within radio and television courses.

Part three rated skills obtained through extra or co-curricular experiences.

Part four was a general query as to the value and need for formal education with an emphasis in broadcasting.

Part five was an open ended subjective section requesting additional comments and observations.

TABLE ONE
GENERAL EDUCATION
N = 55

RANK	ITEM	X	X	RANK	ITEM	X	M	X
1.	Public Speaking	78	1.41	13.	Literature	146	2.65	
2.	Advertising	84	1.51	14.	Theatre	152	2.75	
3.	Journalism	89	1.62	15.	Electronics	158	2.86	
4.	Written Composition	115	2.03	16.	Economics	163	2.96	
5.	Communication Theory	116	2.10	17.	Art	168	3.06	
6.	General Business	121	2.20	18.	Geography	168	3.06	2.75
7.	Motion Picture/Film	132	2.40	19.	Statistics	176	3.20	
8.	Psychology	132	2.40	20.	Accounting	195	3.55	
9.	Sociology	132	2.40	21.	Mathematics	197	3.58	
10.	Marketing	139	2.51	22.	Natural Science	202	2.38	
11.	World/U.S. History	142	2.58	23.	Philosophy	205	3.72	
12.	Polical Science	146	2.65	24.	Foreign Language	205	3.72	
				25.	Biology	229	4.17	

RATINGS BY OHIO BROADCASTERS, IN RATE ORDER, OF GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES/AREAS OF STUDY FOR A BACHELOR DEGREE IN PROFESSIONAL BROADCAST EDUCATION PREPARATION

This five part questionnaire was supplemented with twenty-one personal interviews with station managers, nine of whom had also returned the questionnaire. Thus, if the twelve managers not responding to the questionnaire are added to the sample, there were sixty-seven responses from Ohio broadcasters.

The most expedient means of reporting the results is to divide the findings into two major categories, the objective and the subjective. The objective includes the dtat garnered from the rating scales in the first four parts of the questionnaire. The subjective reflects the results of comments and interviews.

Results

Part One: General Studies

All of the respondents rated each of items included under the general studies section of the survey. Table One shows the placement of the items in order of importance as rated by the broadcasters, not in the order in which they appeared on the questionnaire. In this category we find communications courses in Public Speaking, Journalism and Advertising to be the most important, with written communication and communication theory a close second. Then, in descending order of importance are Social Sciences, e.g. sociology, psychology, history, and the like, the physical sciences and mathematics, including electronics, statistics and accounting, and in last position studies in the natural sciences and philosophy.

These generalizations reflect the relative importance broadcasters place on a general education. This is identified here as a mean of

the means of 2.75, which in the reverse scale used in the study seems a solid C+ grade. Thus, the advocacy of a general liberal arts studies has support from the broadcasters.

Part Two: General Knowledge of Broadcasting

Part Two of the study identifies the need for a knowledge of the broadcast enterprise, as opposed to skills per se. In first place, quite understandably, is sales, equalled by a knowledge of programming. The ability to type and concepts of broadcast journalism are next in importance, followed closely by a knowledge of broadcast law. Problems of station management receive a good rating, but an understanding of research related to broadcasting, and broadcast history, seem also rans in the standings.

In the aggregate, knowledge of the broadcast industry fares better than general studies, with a mean score of 2.06, a B- grade.

Part Three: Broadcast Skills

Part Three of the study separated radio and television since it concerned itself with skills applicable to the enterprise. Let us look at these in that order.

All the radio managers responded to this section and one or the television interviewees.

First in importance was skill in sales, as opposed to just a knowledge of same. In second position is performance followed in order by board operation, production, copywriting, continuity and finally tape editing. The areas were identified rather arbitrarily since the inter relationship is obvious.

The mean score for this grouping was 1.82, a good solid B grade.

TABLE TWO

GENERAL BROADCAST KNOWLEDGE

N = 55

RANK	ITEM	ΣX	M	$\bar{X}$
1.	Sales	95	1.72	
2.	Programming	95	1.72	
3.	Typing	105	1.89	
4.	Broadcast Journalism	104	1.89	2.06
5.	Broadcast Law	108	1.96	
6.	Station Management	116	2.10	
7.	Broadcast Research	130	2.37	
8.	Broadcast History	157	2.86	

RATINGS BY OHIO BROADCASTERS, IN RANK ORDER, OF GENERAL BROADCAST STUDIES FOR BACHELORS DEGREE PROGRAM IN PROFESSIONAL BROADCAST EDUCATION/PREPARATION

TABLE THREE

RADIO SKILLS

N = 50

RANK	ITEM	ΣX	M	$\bar{X}$
1.	Sales	83	1.66	
2.	Announcing	86	1.72	
3.	Borad Operations	88	1.72	
4.	Production	91	1.82	1.82
5.	Copywriting	93	1.86	
6.	Continuity	98	1.96	
7.	Tape Edit	100	2.00	
8.	Others Not Rated:	Interviewing, equipment mantainance, Internship.		

RATINGS BY OHIO BROADCASTERS, IN RANK ORDER, OF RADIO SKILLS/ COURSES IN BACHELORS DEGREE PROGRAM FOR PROFESSIONAL BROADCAST EDUCATION/PREPARATION

For television skills all the television persons responded and twenty-two of the radio managers felt inclined to comment.

As with radio so with television, sales was in first place in a tie with production. Copywriting and performance have a distant second position, followed in order by camera operations, directing, technical director/switching, continuity/traffic, graphics and film editing. In sum a mean of 1.88, another solid B grade.

Part Four: Extra or co-curricular experiences

Part Four had to do with the extra curricular experiences offered the student. Ninety-one percent of the respondents completed this data.

In first place comes board experiences with the appropriate license- at least a third phone with endorsement. Next is studio production and audio-video tape experience, followed by news reporting, radio sales, combo DJ work, telecine operation and news presentation. It seems interesting to note reporting of the news is more important than presentation. Next in order comes music programming, promotion/ public relations, radio continuity/traffic, TV lighting, graphics, and continuity traffice are in a cluster near the end of the standings. In a distant last position is sportscasting.

It seems apparent broadcasters consider these complementaty experiences as important for they give us a B- grade, as reflected in a mean score of 2.16 in the ratings game.

What seemed of further interest, at least as reflected in the mean scores as we have used them here, was the higher rating given to courses in broadcast skills than that afforded the extra-curricular

TABLE FOUR

TELEVISION SKILLS

N = 28

RANK	ITEM	ΣX	M	$\bar{X}$
1.	Sales	41	1.46	
2.	Production	41	1.46	
3.	Copywriting	49	1.75	
4.	Announcing	51	1.82	
5.	Camera Work	55	1.96	1.88
6.	Directing	55	1.96	
7.	Switching	56	2.00	
8.	Continuity/Traffic	56	2.00	
9.	Graphics	61	2.17	
10.	Film Edit	63	2.25	
11.	Others Not Rated: General mantenance, internship, video tape edit			

RATINGS BY OHIO BROADCASTERS, IN RANK ORDER, OF TELEVISION SKILLS COURSES IN BACHELORS DEGREE PROGRAM FOR PROFESSIONAL BROADCAST EDUCATION/PREPARATION

experiences. The validity of this may be open to question, but it does make an interesting observation.

Part Five: Importance of a college degree

The final portion of the questionnaire queried the importance of a college degree with an emphasis in broadcasting as preparation for the broadcast enterprise. The results were perhaps predictable, but here they are. Twenty percent declared a degree essential, fifty-five percent said desireable, twenty percent said good but not necessary, and three percent said the degree was unessential. Two percent did not respond or comment. Thus ninety-five percent of these broadcasters surveyed believe there is some degree of need for the formal baccalaureate degree. Most believe it is desireable, and by implication would give preference to the degree holder, dependent upon circumstances, market and station need.

Part Six: Qualities desired in Job applicants

The final unit in this first phase of a more extended study was a series of personal interviews with broadcasters. Each of the twenty-one persons interviewed was asked the following question: "When interviewing an applicant for a position in your operation, what primary qualities do you look for?"

Responses to the question were as varied as the number who answered, but only in the rhetoric used, not the substance. A review and reflection on the answers resulted in the following seven qualities in order of importance as measured by frequency of response: 1) Experience. 2) Personality, including a neat appearance. 3) Apparent attitude toward the position (a greater concern about

TABLE FIVE

EXTRA CURRICULAR BROADCAST EXPERIENCES

N = 55

RANK	ITEM	ΣX	M	$\bar{X}$
1.	Board operation with license	86	1.72	
2.	Studio Production	96	1.89	
3.	Audio/Video Tape	96	1.89	
4.	News Reporting	98	1.98	
5.	Radio Sales	100	2.00	
6.	Combo D.J.	103	2.06	
7.	Telecine	109	2.17	2.16
8.	News Presentation	109	2.17	
9.	Music Programming	114	2.27	
10.	Promotion/Public Relations	116	2.31	
11.	Radio continuity/ Traffic	116	2.31	
12.	TV Lighting	117	2.34	
13.	TV Graphics	119	2.37	
14.	TV Continuity/Traffic	119	2.37	
15.	Sports Broadcasting	129	2.58	

RANK ORDER RATINGS BY OHIO BROADCASTERS OF EXTRA CURRICULAR BROADCAST EXPERIENCES AS COMPLEMENT TO COURSES IN BACHELOR DEGREE PROGRAM FOR PROFESSIONAL BROADCAST EDUCATION/ PREPARATION

TABLE SIX

IMPORTANCE OF DEGREE AS PREPARATION FOR BROADCATING

N = 55

Bachelor degree essential	20%
Bachelor degree desireable	55%
Bachelor degree good but not essential	20%
Bachelor degree unessential	3%
No Response	2%

ATTITUDE OF OHIO BROADCASTERS TOWARDS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BACHELORS DEGREE AS PREPARATION FOR PROFESSIONAL BROADCAST PARTICIPATION

the job than the fringe benefits). 4) Ability to speak and write clearly, making effective use of the English language. 5) Skills in the operation of the various pieces of hardward, dependent, of course, upon the position for which there is an availability. 6) The applicants awareness of the stations relationship with audience, market and advertisers. 7) The ability to think.

Several of the managers volunteered the observation they often make a "gut" decision to hire an applicant based upon a visceral response to that applicant. The person may not possess all the qualities delineated here, some inner instinct of the interviewer revealed the applicant as a person who has what is needed. Hiring on that basis is rare, but it does happen.

Generally, the men who do the hiring are more receptive to those with a college degree than those without because of the changing nature of the broadcast media.

Conclusions

From the profusion of data gathered in this pilot study, several explicit and implicit observations seem evident, in light of the central hypothesis put forth at the beginning that our broadcast education programs are designed to prepare people for participation in some phase of the broadcast enterprise. Accepting this, do broadcasters think a college education is viable as preparation for professional broadcasting?

First, a formal college education is desireable, and in some arenas essential as adequate preparation. Our commercial brethren are receptive to our graduates when they apply for positions. For the most part broadcasters think we are doing a good job, even though they can't hire everyone that comes along.

Second, broadcasters place greater import on courses and experiences which focus on broadcast skills and techniques, of the how and why of hardware and daily procedures, complemented by a general knowledge of the industry. This is but a reflection of the pragmatic business mind of the manager. He wants his employees capable of helping him turn a profit as soon as possible throught a significant reduction of any "in house" training program to meet the specific needs of a specific position.

Third, the broadcaster does want people with a bachelors degree with an emphasis in broadcasting, with all the characterisitcs and qualities such a degree suggests. As a general rule, people with the degree, if they remain with the industry, are better people who do a better job in every respect. Managers do want people with an awareness of the world and the society in which we are and will live; people who can think. But the primary concern is with meeting the immediate needs of his operation, and he looks for people to meet thos needs. Thus his emphasis on broadcast skills and knowledge ahead of the eternal verities.

What of that which seems implicit in the findings?

Throughout this report emphasis has been placed on people. We sought information, ratings if you will, from people in decision making positions. The primary interest was, and is, in the kind of persons broadcasters want or require. The interviews with our commercial brethren made it abundantly clear they were seeking particular kinds of people to fulfill particular kinds of responsibilities in their operations.

What does this say to those of us who are broadcast educators? In essence whether we believe in the verities or the vocational program, or some golden mean between our fundamental obligation is to contribute to the development of our academic progeny as thinking, feeling, functioning human beings. To assist them in discovering their own self awareness by providing them with an environment and experiences which will make them better human beings. We must take them from where they are and help them become better first as persons, second as broadcasters. Our concern is with the lives of our academic offspring, and this is an awesome, often impossible responsibility.

This report does not reveal much that is new. It does seem to confirm much of that which is being done in broadcast education, if we but recall the various studies of curriculum over the years. The study also suggests continue our program reappraisals if we are to stay abreast of the dynamics of the broadcast enterprise.

KENT STATE
UNIVERSITY
KENT, OHIO 44242

SCHOOL OF SPEECH
(216) 672-2649

December 3, 1974

To: Friends, Colleagues, associates in the broadcast enterprise

From: John Weiser, Kent State University

Subject: Re-evaluation of Academic Program

Please forgive this obvious standarized letter, but University financial emergencies seem to dictate such a recourse. I hope you'll understand.

Kent State is currently engaged in a serious examination of its academic program in Telecommunications (Radio/TV/Film). As a significant part of this process we are securing information and guidance from selected professional broadcasters, many of whom are our own graduates, and from other known interested parties.

We urgently need and sincerely solicit your assistance in the difficult yet mandatory task dictated by the dynamics of the broadcast industry.

In light of this, we ask you to complete the enclosed questionnaire and to add any comments you consider pertinent.

The questionnaire doesn't take too long to complete, even though at first blush it may appear ponderous. If you would take ten or fifteen minutes of your hectic schedule to help us, it would be most appreciated.

A self-addressed, stamped return envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Thanks very much for your cooperation and consideration in this venture.

John C. Weiser
Prof. Speech-Telecommunications

JCW:msg

I. Please rate each of the following items pertaining to general educational background and experiences on a 1 to 5 scale in terms of the area contribution to professional preparation for broadcasting.

1=Very Important 2=Important 3=Desirable 4=Limited Value
5=Unimportant

Art	____	Marketing	____	Theatre (acting)	____
Business	____	Mathematics	____	World/US History	____
Economics	____	Statistics	____	Written Composition	____
Electronics	____	Political Science	____	Public Speaking	____
Geography	____	Psychology	____	Communications Theory	____
Literature	____	Sociology	____	Accounting	____

Advertising	____	Biology	____
Journalism	____	Philosophy	____
Motion Picture Film	____	Foreign Lang.	____
Natural Sciences	____	Others (please note)	____

II. Please rate each of the following substantive and skills materials on the same scale as Item I.

GENERAL:

Broadcast Law	____	Research	____	Other: (please note)
Station Management	____	Typing	____	
Sales	____	Brdcst History	____	
Programming	____	Brdcst Journalism	____	

RADIO:

Announcing	____	Production	____	Other: (please note)
Board Operations	____	Tape Edit	____	
Continuity	____	Sales	____	
Copywriting	____			

TELEVISION:

Announcing	____	Film Edit	____	Other: (please note)
Camera Work	____	Graphics	____	
Continuity/Traffic	____	Production	____	
Copywriting	____	Sales	____	
Directing	____	Switching	____	

III. In addition to structured course experiences, Kent State also offers extra-curricular broadcast experiences to the student. Using the same scale, which of the following best complements the class experiences?

Board Operation w/license ____
Promotion and Public Relations ____
Studio Production ____
Telecine ____
News Reporting ____
News Presentation ____
TV Graphics ____

Radio Sales ____
Audio/Video Tape ____
Combo dj ____
Music Programming ____
Continuity/Traffic-radio ____
Continuity/Traffic-tv ____
Tv lighting ____
Sports broadcasting ____

COMMENTS:

IV. Following are some subjective questions to which your appended comments would be most helpful.

Do you consider a college degree with an emphasis in broadcasting viable as professional preparation for the industry?

Essential ____ Desirable ____ Good but not necessary ____
Unessential ____

Comment:

Do you think there is a need for persons with a formal education in American Broadcasting? Yes ____ No ____

Comment:

What, in your opinion is the future direction of broadcasting in the United States?

Please add any further comments you consider pertinent. (Use back of page(s) if you feel loquacious.)

Your position_____

Station:_____ Radio_____ Tv_____.

Signature (optional)

_____